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WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending October 14 1972

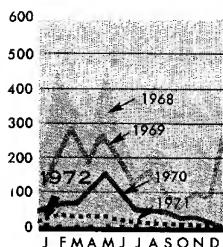
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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1972
Weekly average for each month



Enemy Activity

Communist forces in South Vietnam have largely confined their activities to Military Regions (MRs) 2 and 3 during the past week. The Ben Het Ranger Camp in west-central Kontum Province was overrun, but since then activity has been relatively light in the highlands. In MR 3, the Communists have stepped up their attacks by fire and harassment of lines of communication north of Saigon, but no major engagements have taken place. Communist forces are currently deployed in a rough semi-circle around the capital and while there is little likelihood of direct assaults on it, the enemy can restrict movement in and out of the city as well as launch shelling and sapper attacks in its environs. In the northern delta, the eastward deployment of enemy forces suggests that the Communists will attempt, in the near future, to interdict strategic Route 4 leading to Saigon.

In Cambodia, the Communists continue to hold a small section of Route 5 (the "rice route"), some 35 miles northwest of Phnom Penh. The nine Cambodian Army battalions operating in the area are, however, expected to clear this section during the coming week. The enemy's attempt to interdict the movement of rice via Route 5 was not entirely successful this week, as a 10-truck convoy with 70 tons of rice traveled to Kompong Chhnang where the rice was transferred to boats to bypass the Communist blocking positions. South of Takeo City, elements of the Phuoc Long Front and local Khmer Communists are continuing their efforts to open the logistic corridor along Route 2 into South Vietnam. Southeast of Phnom Penh, a major battle may be developing in the vicinity of Kompong Trabek where South Vietnamese forces are attempting to block the movement of Communist supplies and reinforcements into western MR 3 and the northern delta.

North Vietnamese Army forces in Laos, again using tanks as well as artillery, have driven government irregulars off the southern tip of the Plain of Jars. The friendly units are regrouping and enemy tanks are still being sighted on the southern Plain. In south Laos, there were minor engagements around Khong Sedone and Pakse, but no significant territory changed hands.

Enemy Infiltration and Logistics

During the past week, four South Vietnam-bound infiltration groups, totaling 1,470 personnel, were detected in the Vinh area. The estimated number of infiltrators destined for South Vietnam since 1 October 1972 now stands at some 2,000 - 3,000. Present evidence suggests that the flow of personnel southward will increase in the near future as the infiltration system in Laos moves into operation for the first time this season. NVA transportation elements in the Ban Karai Pass area have already been ordered to prepare for "the southbound personnel mission." Additionally,

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Preparations for the 1972-73 dry season supply push are now well underway. The supply system has been expanded and improved over the summer, and logistics forces are now being augmented by the reassignment of three transportation battalions from the interior of Laos to a major unit west of the DMZ. Other organizational changes have also been made by the enemy over the past several months, apparently for the purpose of streamlining the logistics system through the Laos Panhandle and in South Vietnam and Cambodia. Six major logistics units are now operating in northern South Vietnam and there have been mergers of logistics groups in the Laos Panhandle and northeast Cambodia where responsibilities overlapped. Most recently, a major logistics unit has shifted from northeast Cambodia into the Pleiku area of South Vietnam. With these changes now largely completed, the system should be ready to swing into action when the weather improves in a few weeks.

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